

8.
The Land of Women



Picture 8. Mullin (the eagle-hawk) attacked the white swans that had gone on the sacred lake with out permission, and pulled their feathers out. Wahn (the crows) dropped some black feathers on them, for protection against the cold.

Beyond the mountain where The Great Spirit lived there was a land inhabited only by women. There were no men and no animals. These women made marvellous, magic weapons. The people from other regions wanted these weapons and took skins and meat to trade for them. (As there were no animals in The Land of Women, they had no skins or meat of their own). The only birds the women had seen were the crow (called Wahn by some people) and the eagle-hawk (called Mullian by some people). The eagle-hawk was, by the way, a favourite messenger of The Great Spirit.

The people from other regions could not reach The Land of Women because of a large lake, which no one was allowed to cross. Things worked this way: the people from other regions would leave their skins and meat to the edge of the lake and go away. They would then return to find their things had been taken and replaced by magic weapons.

Wurrunah was a rebellious Aboriginal man. He thought that men were superior to women and he planned to go and steal weapons from the people of the Land of Women.

Wurrunah got a band of men together. He told them each to bring a live animal. When they got to the edge of the lake he turned his two brothers into white Swans and told them to swim on the lake.

The women had never seen swimming birds before and launched their canoes to go and take a closer look. Wurrunah went around the side of the lake, into the women's camp and started stealing their magic weapons. When they saw him, the women left the swans and started to paddle in his direction. Wurrunah then called to his men to release their live animals. The women, who had never seen animals before, were again distracted. As they chased the animals, Wurrunah made his escape with his stolen weapons. He then shared out the weapons among his men, and they went home.

Wurrunah was very proud with his success. Without permission, he began to climb up the mountain where The Great Spirit lived. Before he got far, thunderclouds rolled across the sky. Lightning flashed. One lightning bolt hit Wurrunah, knocking him down and taking away all his energy. He no longer had enough strength to change his brothers from swans back into men.

Mullin (the eagle-hawk) had seen the clouds gathering and knew that his master was calling him. As he returned he saw the white swans on the sacred lake. He was enraged because they had entered this special place without permission. He swooped down and tore their feathers out, leaving them drifting, bleeding and cold. The dying swans called to their brother, Wurrunah, but he was powerless to help them.

However, the Wahn (the crows) heard the Swans. The Wahn were also rebels. They built their nests on the sacred mountain and paid little respect to Mullin and The Great Spirit. They pulled out some of their black feathers and scattered them over the swans so that they were warm and able to get ashore. The crows told the swans that Mullin was also their enemy.

The Great Spirit watched with some amusement. He admired the defiance and kindness of the crows. He allowed the swans to live, but decreed that all Australian swans would be black, and they still show the red of their blood on their beaks.

Things to think about

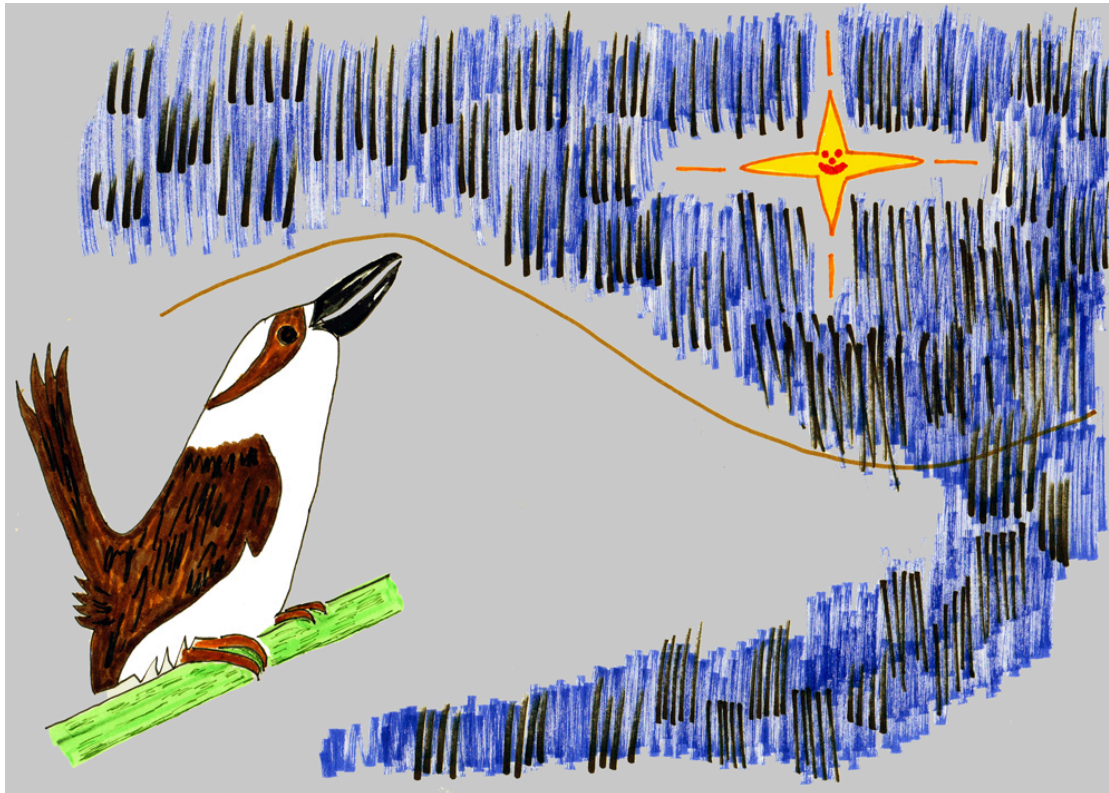
This story tells of two sets of rebels: a man called Wurrunah and the crows. The crows were tolerated, even slightly admired by The Great Spirit. Rebels are usually up against superior strength, so that it takes courage to be a rebel, and perhaps this was why The Great Spirit slightly admired the crows.

But, Wurrunah was struck by lightning. Being a rebel means going against the ordinary way of things. So as well as being brave, the rebel shows some lack of respect for the way things are, and those who do things in the ordinary way. A little lack of respect can be tolerated. But a complete lack of respect for others and all rules usually ends badly. Wurrunah sent his men across the sacred lake without permission, he went into the Land of the Women, stole magic weapons and then, without permission, started to climb a sacred mountain. He went too far and paid the price.

Why did the crows help the swans? Part of the answer was their basic kindness, which The Great Spirit noticed. The other part was that Mullin had injured the swans and Mullin was the enemy of the crows. There is an old saying, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". This reminds us that it's OK to have an enemy [better not to have any, if possible] but if you make everyone your enemy, in the end they'll gang up, and you'll be outnumbered and beaten.

9.

The Kookaburra laughs at dawn



Picture 9. The Kookaburra laughs when it sees the Morning Star.

Slightly different stories were told in different places. This story tells that when the world was young, when The Great Spirit first made the animals, they grew as big as mountains. They fought with each other because it was difficult to get enough food to keep their enormous bodies going. The world was not a pleasant place and The Great Spirit preferred to live in his home in the Milky Way. He shared the Milky Way with a powerful spirit called Punjel.

The earth was cold. The spirits collected a huge pile of firewood in the sky. But they had no fire to light their wood. Punjel wanted to get fire from the earth, but The Great Spirit said they should wait.

Then, on earth, the Eagle and the Emu began to fight. The Eagle chased the Emu away, and then saw two eggs in the Emu's nest. He took one and threw it high into the sky. It smashed into the wood pile and burst into flames.

The Great Spirit decided that it was now time to bring people and small animals, and small birds, reptiles, fish and insects into the world, and he made this happen.

The fire began to die down. The Great Spirit announced that now they had fire in the sky, he would never let it go out. He said he would let it die down so that the creatures could sleep, but then he would build it up in the morning.

Punjel asked how the creatures would know when to wake up, and The Great Spirit said he would put the Morning Star in the sky just before dawn. Punjel asked how the creatures would know the Morning Star had appeared, because they would be asleep with their eyes closed. The Great Spirit said there should be a noise to wake them, and gave Punjel the job of finding a good noise.

Punjel thought about a lot of different noises. He wanted a noise that wouldn't frighten the creatures. He went to earth and wandered around the bush. Then he heard the happy sound of the Kookaburra laughing. He was delighted with this noise and asked the Kookaburra to watch for the Morning Star every morning, and then give his laugh. The Kookaburra was pleased to agree.

Aboriginal children are not allowed to imitate the laughter of the Kookaburra, in case he is offended, and stops his morning wake-up call.

Things to think about

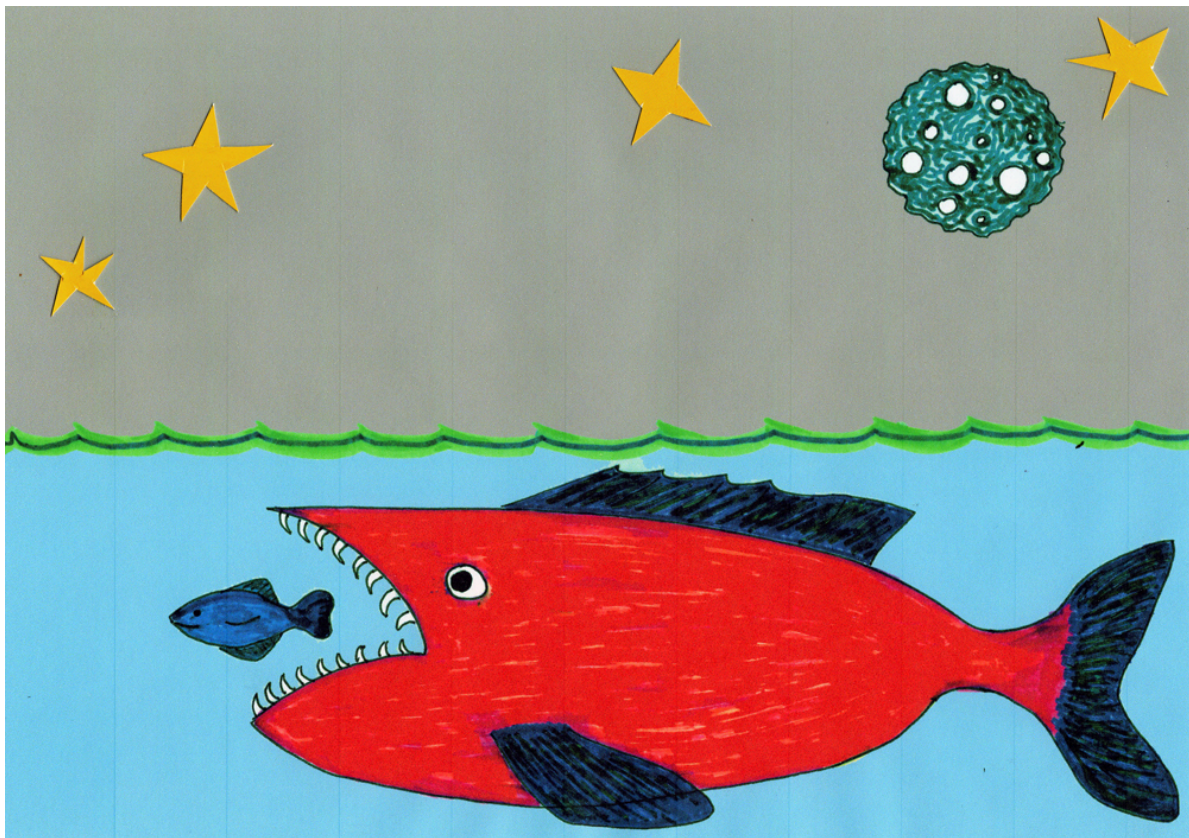
The Great Spirit and Punjel both wanted to make the lives of the creatures pleasant. They wanted the creatures to be warm and have restful sleep. Punjel was careful to find a noise that would not frighten them.

This story is important because The Great Spirit made mistakes. When he first made the animals they grew to the size of mountains, and he had to make smaller ones. We all make mistakes. We should do the best we can, but if we make mistakes, we shouldn't call ourselves failures and give up. If The Great Spirit can make mistakes, so can we. Like him, we should try again, eventually we'll get it right.

Children are not to imitate the laughter of the Kookaburra, in case he is offended. If children do imitate the laughter of the Kookaburra it is most likely that they are simply having fun, and unlikely that the Kookaburra would take offence. Nevertheless, it is better not to do something if there is a chance it will cause offence. No children ever grew up with major problems because they weren't allowed to imitate the Kookaburra. But, what do you think?

10.

The Blue Fish and the moon



Picture 10. After they died, Loolo became a blue fish at the bottom of the sea, and Nullandi became the Moon.

This story starts before the moon was formed, and concerns two men, one unhappy and the other happy. It is one of the most profound stories ever told.

Loolo was known as the unhappy man. As he lay next to the fire with his wife at night, he would tell her all the upsetting things he believed. He believed that the night was unfriendly. He believed that when they died their spirits would walk through unending night, until they shrivelled up and ceased to exist. His wife would cry and he would try to comfort her.

Nullandi was known as the happy man. Laughter came from around his camp fire. He liked the night and said it gave rest to the eyes after the fierce light of the day. His wife called him foolish and said that at night one could not see.

Good-naturedly, Nullandi told his wife and children to look into the campfire and then to look into the dark. When they did, they saw the shape of fires in the darkness, and they asked him if there were fires all over the world. "No", he answered, he said the fires they saw in the darkness were in their heads.

When Nullandi's wife and children saw the stars in the sky, and asked him to explain them. Nullandi said he thought the stars were sparks which came from a fire lit by The Great Spirit.

Nullandi pretended to be The Great Spirit, he stood up and waved a burning log in the air, he made a ball of flame and showers of sparks. His family was delighted and asked him to do it again. But Nullandi refused. He said that he should not have done it the first time, because no man could be like The Great Spirit.

One day Loolo and Nullandi were talking. Loolo said that his wife cried when he told her that after they died their spirits would die and that would be the end of them. Nullandi said that he disagreed, he said that he believed that after death there was another world, even more beautiful than this world.

Loolo said that this was not a beautiful world. He said that they had to work hard to find food, that they were often thirsty and hungry, and that when they died there would only be darkness and then nothing.

Nullandi told Loolo that could believe that if he wanted to. He said that Loolo could believe he would be a Blue Fish at the bottom of the sea when he died, if that was what he wanted to believe. He also told Loolo that he should not say sad things to his wife, and that he should let her be happy.

Loolo asked Nullandi what he believed would happen after death. Nullandi said he wasn't certain, but that if there were people like Loolo in the world, who feared the dark, perhaps The Great Spirit would make him into a light, to comfort them.

Eventually, Loolo and Nullandi grew old and died. Loolo became a blue fish which lived at the bottom of the sea. He was soon eaten by another fish, and that was the end of him. The Great Spirit made Nullandi into the Moon, and he was then called Bahloo, the cheerful God of the Moon.

[There are some other Aboriginal stories about the origin of the moon. One says that The Sun Goddess made the Moon to keep the Morning Star company.]

Things to think about

Loolo and Nullandi were different people with different views of the world. We should not, right from the start, think that Loolo was wrong or bad.

If two people see a glass which contain water up to the middle, some people will say the glass is half empty, and others will say the glass is half full. People have different ways of seeing the world, some are more happy or positive (they are called optimists) and some are less happy or negative (they are called pessimists). That's just the way people are made.

Some times it is wise to be a bit of a pessimist, if you expect bad things, such as droughts, you may be better prepared when the do come (as eventually, they will).

However, there are great advantages to being a bit of an optimist. Some people believe that optimists have happier lives. If you are happy, you tend to make the people around you happy, and with happy people around you, you tend to be happy yourself. So, being optimistic can start a reinforcing cycle. If people find you pleasant company they will offer

friendship and you will get more opportunities. If you go for a job with a positive attitude you are more likely to get the job than if you go along with a negative attitude.

Just as some people are born fast runners and some are born slow runners, some people are born with a greater tendency to happiness and some are born with a lesser tendency to happiness. And what happens to you in life also makes a difference. If your mother was a champion runner (like Cathy Freeman) and trains you in running from an early age, this will increase your running ability. But, if you are unlucky and your legs were injured in a car accident when you are a child, this will probably decrease your running ability. In the same way, if you grow up in a happy family and are loved and valued, you may learn a happy attitude and be more likely to be an optimist. If you are neglected or have sad experiences while you are growing up, you may learn to be unhappy and become a pessimist.

We now come to an important point. If we are feeling very pessimistic, it is better for us, and those around us, if we make ourselves as energetic and positive (optimistic) as possible. We might be born with a tendency to negativity (pessimism), and we might have had a tough time growing up, with lots of disadvantages. But, we have brains and we can make our own decisions about what we **do** in the future.

Loolo was very pessimistic (negative). We don't know if he was born pessimistic or whether he had a tough life growing up. We do know that Loolo believed that when he died his spirit would soon also die, and that will be the complete end of him. So, his belief is going to make him feel negative.

We can't really be blamed for what we believe. We know that Loolo is not a bad person. When his wife cried, he tried to comfort her. But, perhaps he could have done more to give himself and others a better chance to be happy.

Nullandi said to Loolo, that he can believe there is no life after death if he wanted to. Loolo may have thought a great deal about what happens after death, and he may not have been able to believe there is life after death.

But, Nullandi made the point that it was what Loolo chose to **do**, which was important. He could open his mind to the possibility that there is life after death, he could agree that there are two points of view (as there are on most things).

Even opening your mind to the possibility that there is a happier answer makes us happier. You might not be able to believe the future will be positive. There is always the possibility of a positive future and you can always **behave** as if there is the possibility of a positive future. You will benefit from any effort you make.

Nullandi also told Loolo that he should not push his pessimistic views on his wife. This is good advice. Loolo should admit that he may be wrong, that the future may be bright. Pushing his pessimistic views on his wife made her unhappy, and this made his world unhappier than it needed to be.

This story has some other great bits.

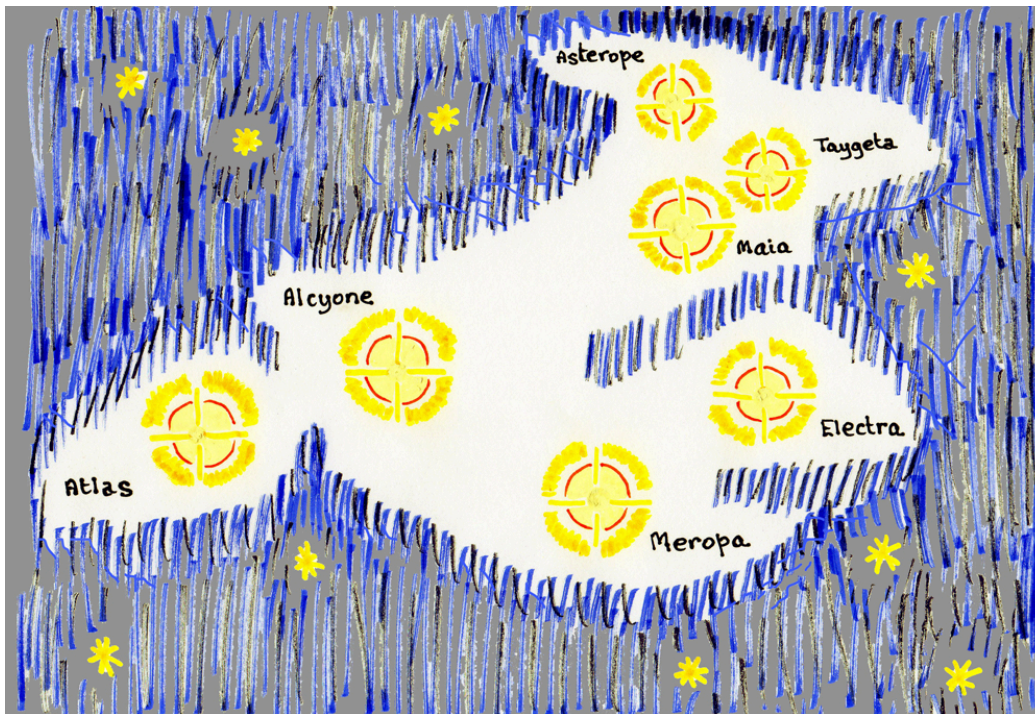
Nullandi is unable to answer all the questions of his children and Loolo. He does not pretend he knows everything. You can never be wrong if you say, "I don't know". It is an honest answer and nobody knows everything. A brain surgeon doesn't know how to drive a train.

Nullandi entertained his wife and children by pretending to be The Great Spirit. When they asked him to do it again, he refused. He felt that to repeat his performance would be disrespectful to The Great Spirit. He already regretted what he had done. The Great Spirit would probably not have been offended by Nullandi. However, he may have been offended if Nullandi had continued. We all make mistakes, and it is fine to have a bit of fun. But to keep having fun at other people's (or The Great Spirit's, for that matter) expense, is disrespectful and may end in trouble.

There is one very interesting part in this story, which has nothing to do with human relationships. To grasp its importance we need to be aware that the story is tens of thousands of years old; we know this because it deals with the formation of the moon, and therefore, it is one of the very early Aboriginal stories. After they looked at the campfire and then looked away, Nullandi's wife and children could see fires in the darkness and asked if there were fires all over the world. The way such images persist in the brain has only been properly understood in the last century. When Nullandi replied that the images were not out in the world, but in his wife's and children's heads, he became perhaps the first brain scientist in the world.

Nullandi was a very clever person. He told Loolo not to tell his wife unhappy thoughts because this would make her unhappy. He was saying exactly what clever people say today, that what you think can change how you feel.

11. The Seven Sisters



Picture 11. The Seven Sisters (Pleiades star cluster) can be seen in the night sky.

The Seven Sisters is the name of seven stars (which are known to astronomers as the Pleiades star cluster) which appear in the night sky. These stars are mentioned in the myths of the ancient Greeks, Vikings, Native Americans, Nepalese, Japanese and many Pacific populations, in addition to the Australian Aborigines.

In Australian Aboriginal mythology there are a number of stories about The Seven Sisters. We will look at only one.

This story starts with an old man called Yoola, who was always annoying young women. One day he saw seven young women who were sisters, and he chased them. They avoided him and went to a Karraloo water-hole, close to the Petermann Range.

Yoola followed them. When they saw him coming they ran away to the Puntanbanya water-hole. He followed them.

When the seven sisters saw Yoola approaching, they ran away again. This time they went into the desert. They held a corroboree and an initiation ceremony.

Yoola followed the seven sisters into the desert.

When they saw him they ran away again. This time they ran to the Wattapulka water-hole, and then to the Wankarrennga water-hole.

Yoola followed. When he found them at the Wankarrennga water-hole he used magic to make cliffs grow up around them, so they could not escape. The sisters jumped into the water-hole. Yoola jumped in after them, and drowned them.

Their spirits went up into the sky as the Seven Sisters Stars.

Things to think about

If you want to get to know people and perhaps become friends, the best thing is to be friendly. You cannot force people to be your friend.

Of course, young people sometimes play “hard to get”, which means they take little notice of person whom they know is keen to get to know them. What they sometime want is for the person to “prove” they really do like/love them. Occasionally, some people who know another person is keen on them think it is “fun” to see how far that person will go to get their attention.

If you have no intention of ever forming a friendship and have “fun” by making them try harder, you are actually being cruel. And should be ashamed of yourself. Well, that’s what I think. But, what do you think?

In this story, The Seven Sisters were not interested to spend time with Yoola, and were not “leading him on”. They gave no encouragement to Yoola. He was trying to force them into a friendship. When you think about it, force is the opposite of friendship. Yolla was older and should have known better.

12.

The Kangaroo and the Wombat



Picture 12. The kangaroo threw a big stone down on the wombat's head.

The Kangaroo (called Mirram by some people) and the Wombat (called Warreen by some people) were good friends, but they did some things differently.

Mirram preferred to sleep outside. Warreen, on the other hand, liked to sleep inside. He built a gunyah (a bark house) and would light a fire on cold nights.

However, one winter night, when it was colder and wetter than usual, the Kangaroo wanted to come into the wombat's warm, dry gunyah.

Warreen was reluctant, but Mirram pushed his way inside. Warreen only allowed the kangaroo to stand away from the fire, up against the wall. There was a crack in the wall and cold wind and rain came through, and Mirram had a very uncomfortable night.

In the morning, Mirram picked up a large rock, lifted it up high and smashed it down on Warreen's head. Mirram said that he did this was because Warreen had treated him badly the night before, and that the Wombat would remember his bad manners forever, because from this day on, he would have a flat head.

From that day, the Kangaroo and the Wombat have never had a friendly conversation.

But, the Wombat had his revenge. He made a spear and when Mirram was looking the other way, Warreen threw his spear and hit the Kangaroo at the end of his back.

Mirram could not get the spear out. The Wombat laughed and said that Mirram would remember this day, because from this day on, he would always have a very long tail.

Things to think about

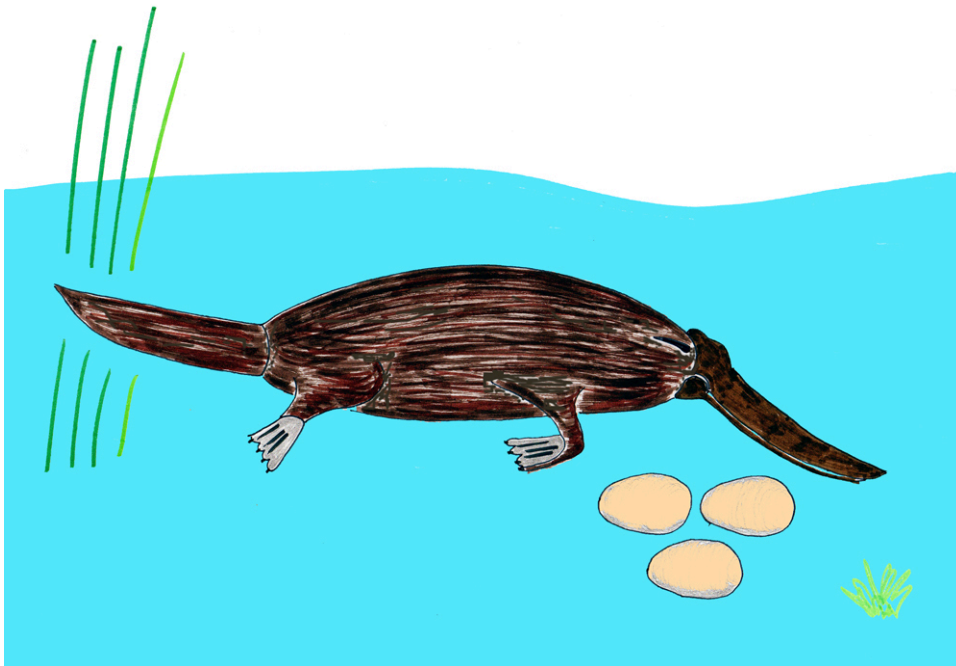
This story tells us what we already know: if you do unkind things to others, they will do unkind things back to you. So, we need to find better ways of dealing with problems between people than nastiness and violence. Can you think of ways all this could have been avoided?

Violence between people with different beliefs and desires is common. Is there a difference in the violence found between Aboriginal tribes, religious groups and nations and individuals?

Can you think of people who are very different, but who still get along well together?

Can you think of people who are only slightly different, who can't get along together?

13.
The Platypus



Picture 13. The platypus has a beak, fur, a tail, lays eggs and swims in water.

These few sentences come from a long story about the Platypus.

Toward the end of the story all the creatures attended a meeting. They were trying to work out which group of animals the Platypus belonged to.

The Birds claimed that because the Platypus had a beak and laid eggs, he was clearly a member of their group. The Lizards and Snakes claimed that because the Platypus laid eggs, he could belong to their group. The Kangaroos, Possums, Wallabies and other animals pointed out that because the Platypus was covered with fur and had a tail, he belonged to the animal group. And, the fish said that as he spent much of his time under water, the Platypus belonged to their group.

Finally they asked the Platypus himself. He said he was related to everyone, but belonged to no particular tribe and went away to live by himself.

Things to think about

The other creatures all liked the Platypus and wanted him to be part of their group. The Platypus was pleased to have them all as friends, but he chose to live by himself.

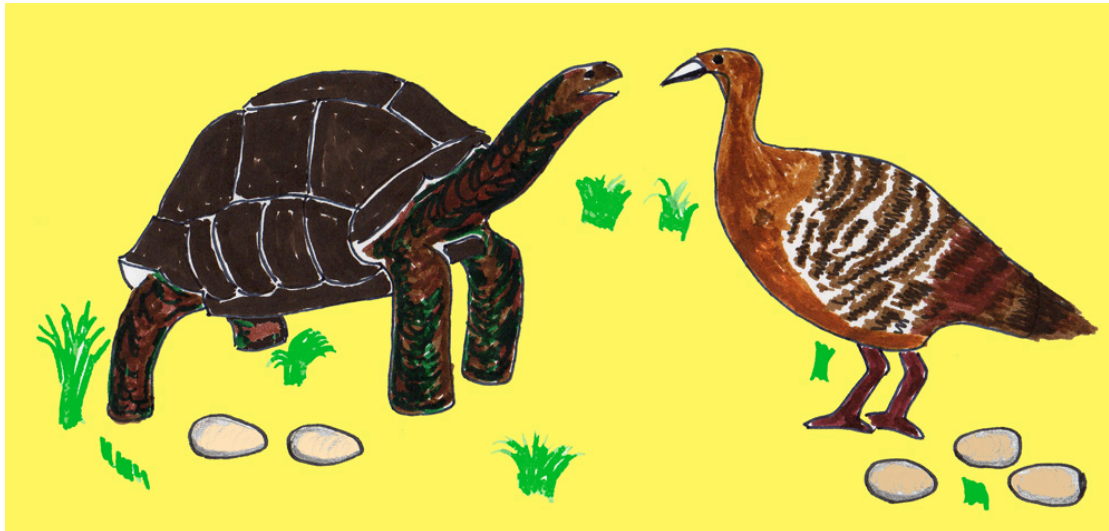
Most of us like to live a busy social life and do lots of visiting and going out. But some people prefer to live quietly and “to do their own thing”.

We don't all have to be the same. Some people like playing football and some people don't even like watching football on television.

This part of the Platypus story tells us many things. One is that it is OK to live quietly by yourself, if that is what you want to do. Another thing is that we should allow people to be themselves and not try to force them to be like everyone else. One more thing is, when we are trying to find out what is "good" for someone, we should ask them.

14.

The Mallee Bird



Picture 14. The Tortoise tells the Mallee Bird how she lays her eggs in mud, instead of in a nest.

The Tortoise (known as Wayambah by some people) was married to the Kookaburra (known as Goorgourgahgah by some people). They were different in many ways, and this led to some arguments. The Kookaburra expected his wife to lay her eggs in a nest in a tree. The Tortoise pointed out that she could not fly or climb trees and that she had a hard shell, and if she sat on her eggs, she would break them. She went off and laid her eggs in the mud.

The Mallee bird (known as Woggoon by some people) was watching and listening. The Tortoise explained to the Mallee bird that the sun kept her eggs warm, and that this was very convenient, as this gave her plenty of time to do other things. She suggested that the Mallee bird could do the same.

The Mallee bird talked this over with her husband. At first he disagreed, but in the end he helped her build a mound of sticks, leaves and sand. She scraped a hole in the mound, laid her eggs and covered them over.

In time, the chicks hatched. Ever since, the mallee birds have laid their eggs in mounds of sticks, leaves and sand, and got on with doing other things.

Things to think about

This story shows that there are different ways of doing things, and it's OK to be different, as long as no one gets hurt. It wouldn't be OK if the Tortoises and the Mallee birds buried their eggs and they all died. But, their way produces perfectly healthy young ones.

How is this story the same but different from the story of the Platypus?

Some people eat with their fingers, others with chopsticks and others with a knife and fork. People starve because there isn't enough food, not because they're eating it the "wrong" way.

One last point, this story tells us that we can learn important things from others. Have you ever learned something important from others?

15.

The digging bone



Picture 15. The Kangaroo, the Emu and the Willy-wagtail found the bone which the Kangaroo has been thinking about.

This story begins when there were lagoons and marshlands in the area which is now a part of the sea called the Gulf of Carpentaria. These marshland areas were home to many water-birds and the drier parts were home to many animals and reptiles.

The water-birds thought the marshlands belonged to them. Eventually, they became annoyed when the animals and reptiles drank from, or swam in, the marshland water.

The water-birds told the animals and reptiles that they were damaging the birds' nests, breaking down the reeds and making the water dirty. They said that there was plenty of room for the animals and reptiles far away on the dry land and plenty of water to drink in streams.

The water-birds said, the animals and reptiles were no longer allowed to come to the marshlands. The animals and reptiles replied that they had as much right to the marshlands as the water-birds, but the birds would not discuss the matter any further.

The animals and reptiles formed a large group and came up to the edge of the marshlands. The birds attacked them with their beaks and claws. And a battle started which continued for days. Hundreds were killed on both sides.

Three did not take part in the fighting: the Kangaroo (called Mirram by some people), the Emu (Dinewan) and the Willy-wagtail (Deereeree). They stayed well back. They agreed that the trouble had started because the birds were selfish. They tried to think of a way to stop the fighting. They agreed that if the marshlands disappeared, there would be nothing to fight over, and both sides would find other places to live.

The Willy-wagtail said that if they could let the sea into the marshlands, the fighting would end. But, they couldn't work out how to let the sea in.

They built a shelter together and went to sleep, hoping that The Great Spirit would tell them how to end the fighting in their dreams.

In the morning they talked again. The Emu and the Willy-wagtail had dreams that didn't seem very helpful. The Kangaroo did not dream, because he did not sleep. He stayed awake all night thinking about a bone he had seen some days earlier. He said he wondered whether The Great Spirit had put these thoughts into his head for a special reason. He asked the other two to go with him while he had another look at this bone.

They found the bone and the Kangaroo picked it up. He could feel magic in it. He dug one end into the ground and pushed it along. Then the bone began to move without any pushing. With the Kangaroo holding onto the top end, the three creatures ran after the bone. In this way, a great trench was dug to the coast.

Seawater raced into this trench and the lagoons and marshlands were covered forever, and made the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Things to think about

This story shows that selfishness leads to trouble: in this case, the death of many birds, animals and reptiles, and the loss of the lagoons and marshlands.

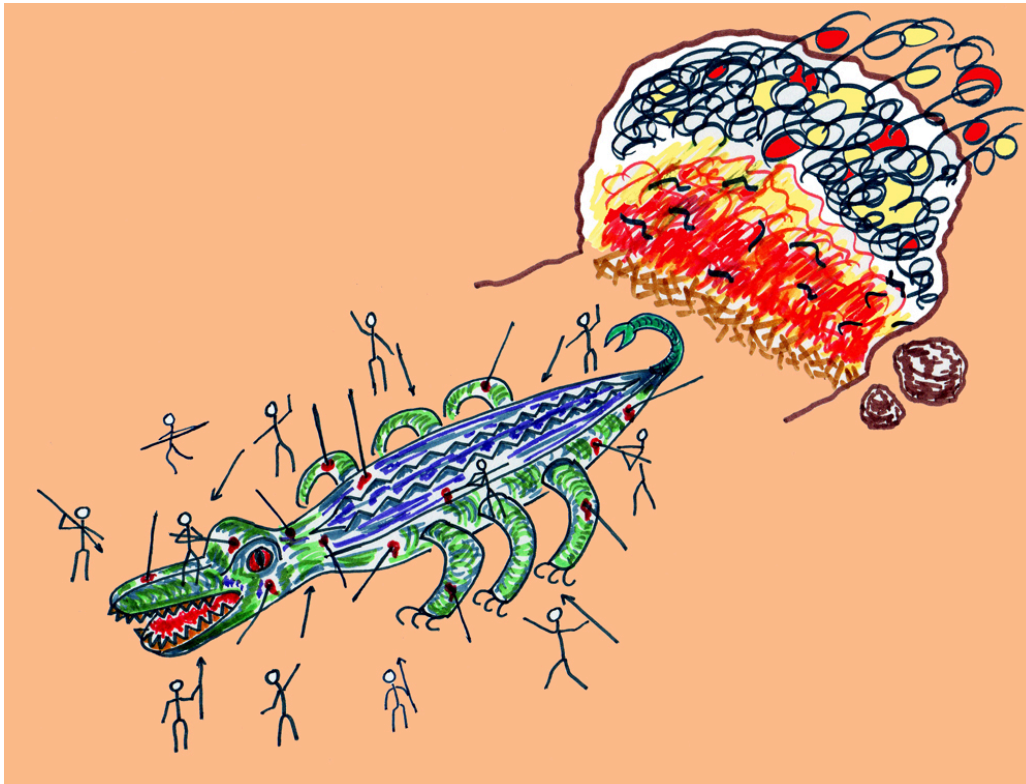
Selfishness and greediness are very powerful feelings. If you are feeling selfish or greedy it is very hard to keep your feelings under control. If you try hard and tell yourself that everyone is equal, and it is better to share than to fight, that can help.

In this case, it would have been better if the birds, animals and reptiles had been able to share, rather than going to war.

Is it just individual people who find it hard to share, or do whole countries find it hard to share? What is the United Nations, and what does it try to do?

What did you think of this solution, to take away the thing that both sides wanted so that there was nothing left to fight over? The Kangaroo, the Emu and the Willy-wagtail thought of the idea, but didn't know how it could be achieved. The Great Spirit has also thought of the idea, and he provided the magic to make it possible. Was it a clever solution?

16.
The Whowhie



Picture 16. The men and animals built a huge fire at the mouth of the Whowhie's cave. When it came out, the men killed it with spears and clubs.

Monsters are mentioned in the myths and legends of all cultures. Australian Aboriginal stories have many different monsters.

The Whowhie was one of the most feared. He lived in a cave in the bank of the Murray River and was longer than five tall men. He looked something like a goanna, but was uglier. He had a head like a frog, three legs on each side and a long tail. He ate flesh and his hunger was never satisfied.

The Whowhie moved slowly, so it was not so dangerous in daylight because it could be seen coming. But, it could creep very quietly, and it was very dangerous at night. Campfires didn't scare him (as they do all animals), in fact, campfires only told him where to find people to eat. He could creep up on sentries and swallow them whole, before they could raise the alarm. He could eat 60 people and then go on to eat any rats, wombats or kangaroos that he could find.

All the men and animals agreed that they had to kill the Whowhie. But, it was too strong for any single group, so they would need a clever plan.

Then news came that the Whowhie had attacked yet another camp. He had eaten everybody in the tribe, except a boy who ran away and told the story.

All the tribes of men and animals came together. They knew that after such a huge meal the Whowhie would be slow and sleepy and would probably go back to his cave in the river bank.

They were correct, and water-rats told them that the Whowhie had gone to the deepest part of his cave and it would probably take him a week to get back to the entrance.

The next morning all the men and animals carried piles of brushwood into the mouth of the cave and made a huge fire. It filled the cave with choking thick smoke. They kept the fires going for day after day. They could hear the Whowhie coughing and each day, his cough got closer.

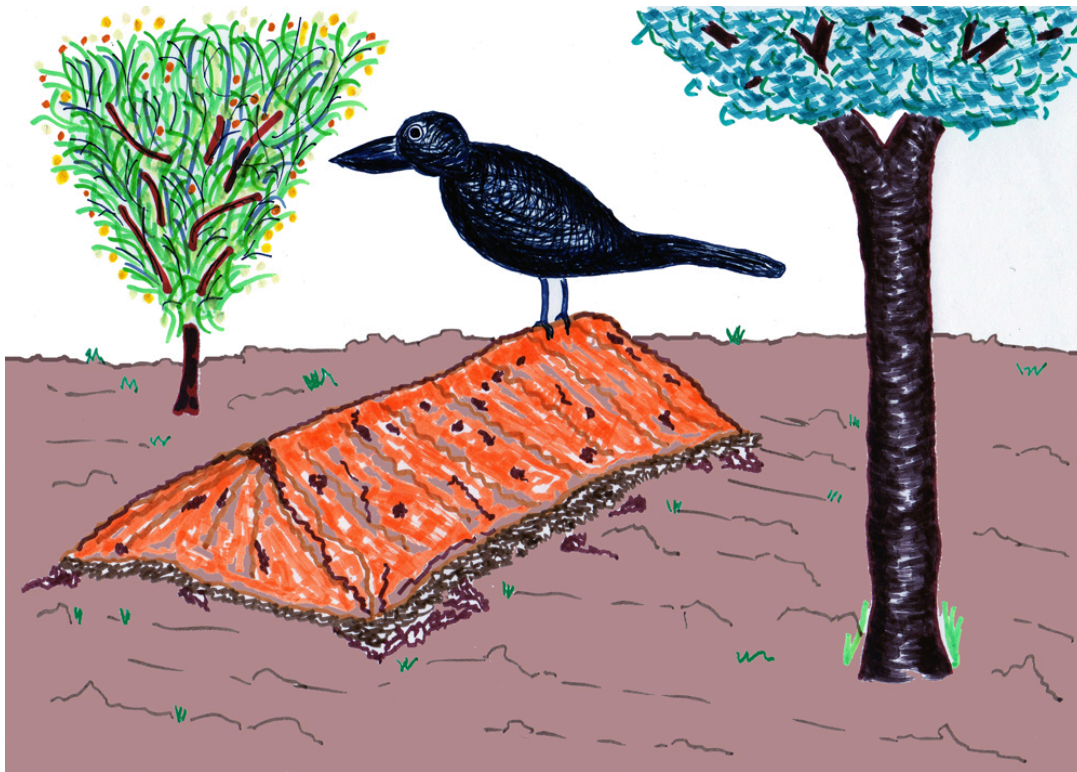
On the seventh day the warriors were ready. The Whowhie came coughing and crashing through the fire. His eyes were red and his skin was black from the smoke, and he looked even more frightening than usual. The warriors attacked him with spears, clubs and flint knives. The Whowhie roared and thrashed around, but he was soon dead. And the people were free to live happily again.

Things to think about

Some jobs are too big for one person. We always need a good plan, and we often need to cooperate with others to get the job done.

Do you feel any sympathy for the Whowhie?

17.
The Twins



Picture 17. A crow was sitting on Harrimiah's grave, beneath a wattle and a wild apple tree. He told them that Harrimiah's spirit had gone to a place where jealousy and grief did not exist.

Perindi and Harrimiah were twins. They were both good looking and skilful. They had a strong, loving relationship, they co-operated in hunting and lived together. They were equally popular with the girls and boys of the camp, and neither had plans for marriage in the near future.

The day before a festival of tribal games was to be held, a young woman spoke to Perindi. She told him that she admired his physique, his hunting ability and his wisdom. She then claimed that Harrimiah had been boasting that he was braver, faster and smarter than Perindi.

Perindi could not, at first, believe his twin has said these things. But, he gradually became convinced and decided to teach Harrimiah a lesson.

Next day one of the events was a corroboree, and in preparation, they painted each other's body. Harrimiah painted Perindi beautifully, but Perindi painted Harrimiah very poorly (although Harrimiah was not aware that he had been painted poorly).

As they walked from their gunyah (bark house) to the meeting place they were greeted by the young women. Most of them crowded around Perindi. Harrimiah was surprised as usually, they attracted about equal numbers of women admirers.

Some women giggle at Harrimiah. He asked if there was something wrong with his appearance. They reassured him that everything was fine, but then giggled again.

Later, Harrimiah bent over a pool to take a drink, and saw his reflection. He saw that, on this occasion, Perindi, who was a good painter, had painted him very poorly. Harrimiah then understood why the young women had admired Perindi, but had giggled at him.

Harrimiah asked his brother why he has painted him poorly. Perindi said that he had painted Harrimiah well, and that he (Perindi) probably attracted more attention because he had better physique. Perindi added that it would be interesting to see what happened after the dances, because he (Perindi) was a much the better dancer than his twin.

Harrimiah was sad. Neither of the twins had ever said such things before, and Perindi's boastfulness was disappointing.

Both danced very well, better than all the other young men. After the dance, a number of young women gathered around Harrimiah. Suddenly, Perindi was full of anger. He shouted that from now on they would go their own ways, and that if he ever saw Harrimiah again, he would put a spear through his heart. Perindi walked away to new hunting grounds.

Perindi eventually married a young woman from the Blue-tongue Lizard totem.

Harrimiah was very sad to have lost the love and company of his twin. However, he made a new life after a time, and married a young woman of the Frilled Lizard totem. Marriage suited him well and he was happy.

One day when he was out hunting Harrimiah walked around a bush and unexpectedly, came face to face with Perindi. Harrimiah stood like a statue, but Perindi leapt on him, bit into his neck and tore the skin away. Family members pulled them apart.

Harrimiah's wounded neck was treated with mixture of ash and mulga wood and healed quite well, but left an ugly scar. This scar can still be seen on the neck of the Lace Lizard.

Perindi's vicious attack on his brother was unacceptable to his wife and her relatives and they drove him out of their home. He then lived alone in the bush and developed some peculiar habits.

Harrimiah was also changed by the attack. He spent a lot of time away from his camp, sleeping alone under the stars. The trees and the animals encouraged him to take revenge. But, what he wanted was the love of his twin. Eventually he dug a pit beneath a wattle and a wild apple tree and laid down in it. The night wind blew sand over him and he slept (never to wake).

After Harrimiah had been away a long time, his wife and some friends followed his trail. They found his grave, which was guarded by a crow.

The crow told them that Harrimiah's grief had come to an end. That he loved them all, including his twin, but that life was not big enough to contain his sorrow.

His wife said that when Harrimiah awoke, he would find the joy of another life. When the wattle and the apple tree bloomed, Harrimiah's spirit rose from the grave, and along with the spirit of his wife and her companions, entered a world where jealousy and grief did not exist.

Things to think about

A young woman told Perindi that his twin (Harrimiah) had been saying bad things about him. Should she have said that?

Some people believe that if Harrimiah truly said those things, then they had a responsibility to their friend, Perindi, to tell him what had been said. Other people believe that even if Harrimiah had said such things, that no good would come from telling Perindi. What do you think?

However, when people tell you this sort of thing, they are often exaggerating what has been said. Sometimes when people tell you this sort of thing they are telling lies.

You will probably have people play this sort of trick on you at some time in your life. Perhaps it has happened already? Some people like to make trouble between friends.

There are two reasons people make trouble in this way. First, they are jealous of the close friendship and want to break it up. Second, they hope that because they tell a person something very personal (even if it is a lie), that they will become that person's new best friend.

The story tells us how Perindi became jealous and this emotion ruined his life. Jealousy had been discussed in other places in this book. We must try to recognize our own feelings of jealousy and deal with them. In this case, jealousy not only cost Perindi the friendship with his twin, but it also cost him his relationship with his wife and family.

Harrimiah was very sad about the loss of his twin, and it seems that he was so sad that in the end, he died. It is natural that we feel sad when unwanted things happen. However, after a time, we need to stop thinking about what we have lost, and to look to the future, to the new things we can do and the new people we can meet.

What do you hope for in the future? What do you think will make you happy?

If something bad happens now, does that mean the future is not there? Does something bad now mean that the future has disappeared, like smoke in the sky? If it is January now, and something bad happens, does that mean August will never come? If something bad happens now, can you be happy in the future?